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**THE LIMITATIONS OF SCIENCE.** LOUIS TRENCHARD MORE, Ph.D., Professor in the University of Cincinnati. Henry Holt & Co. 1915. Pp. 268. \$1.50.

This is a critical review of present scientific tendencies, by a scientist. The value of such a book, except in the comparatively rare cases in which the author is both a scientist and a philosopher, lies in its selecting and presenting in comparatively untechnical form certain broadly characteristic instances of scientific method. The present book contains matter for critical reflection; and to have that matter so collected and summarized is of advantage both to the general reader and to the philosopher. But the author cannot be said to exhibit either originality or skill in his own criticism.

The book is a plea for a more rigorous positivism in science. Such a plea is timely in view of the present tendency among scientists to speculate on the ultimate constitution of matter. The new hypothesis of the electron, the conception of radio-activity, and the revision of the classic mechanics through the introduction of the principle of relativity, have led to such extravagances as Lorentz's attempt to conceive the ultimate substance as an electro-magnetic entity, or Einstein's hypothesis that length and time vary with motion. According to the author's view, it is both impossible and outside the province of science to conceive an ultimate physical substance that shall possess consistently and intelligibly all the properties that the most recent experimental discoveries require. Electricity is as impossible a substance as the earlier ether. The only hypothesis that has any virtue is the atomic hypothesis, and its only value is "to give a concrete, though crude, image of matter reduced to its simplest conditions." "The word electricity gives no such image of matter; it conveys absolutely no idea of materiality nor even of space or time relations."

It appears then that the author, after all, objects not so much to postulates that carry one beyond the data of experimentation as to those new postulates with which it is now proposed to supplant matter. He is not so much positivistic as conservative. In speaking of his own view, he says: "We have first postulated a real and objective universe, and assigned to matter rather than to energy the rôle of being an entity." He is not troubled by the fact that "the fundamental attribute of matter which makes it recognizable by our senses is force." In other words, although admitting that the phenomenon is force rather than matter, and that matter is thus a trans-phenomenal entity invoked for theoretical motives, he does not on that account hesitate to invoke it. He does not hesitate,

even though he has himself insisted on "the truth that we cannot attain any knowledge of things themselves but only of their attributes as they affect the senses."

Thus Professor More is not one of the radical positivists who would refrain from asserting the existence of anything that cannot be sensibly experienced, and confine science to the most economical possible description of the data of sense; but he is a positivist of the Spencerian, agnostic school, an old-fashioned relativist, who asserts the existence of an unknowable absolute. He does not escape the difficulty inherent in the agnostic view—how assert the existence of that of which we know nothing? Furthermore, it is inevitable that in such a view the agnosticism should annul the positivism. For if one can transcend experience in one's fundamental metaphysical assertion, why should science not hope to do likewise? And the mind which is convinced that reality lies beyond the range of perception or any mode of certain knowledge can scarcely be restrained from adventuring thither by the less trustworthy means of the imagination or the speculative reason.

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RALPH BARTON PERRY.

THE CENTENNIAL HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY. HENRY OTIS DWIGHT. The Macmillan Co. 1916. Pp. vi, 605. \$1.00.

The Society was founded in the belief that the Bible is not only inspired but inspiring. The men who established it were confident that the book of itself, without comment, without the aid of preachers, was able to change the life of the reader and to save his soul. It had the independent efficacy of medicine; it needed only to be taken. They resolved to bring it within reach of every man. The first year they printed and distributed six thousand Bibles; the second year, seventeen thousand. With the third year they began to publish the New Testament separately: seven thousand copies of the Christian Scriptures, besides twenty-three thousand copies of the Christian and the Jewish Scriptures bound together. As the century of this publication ended, the report of the ninety-ninth year showed a sale of six million New Testaments over against three hundred and fifty thousand Old and New combined. These figures represent a lesson which the Society has learned by its experience. At the beginning the common theory was that the Bible is all valuable alike, being, as they said, the "word of God." It gradually appeared, however, as a matter of statistical fact that the New Testament is more valuable than the Old for the purposes of religion